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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

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SUBJECT Dismantling, Production of the Leuna Works

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1. Dismantling :

a. About 40 percent of the ammonia plants were dismantled. The figure was originally 75 percent but some of the installations were later rebuilt.

b. The nitric acid factory was entirely dismantled. At present, however, 10 percent of the production has been resumed as it was necessary to meet the plant's own requirements. The production output and quality are unsatisfactory.

c. The plant for heavy water has been dismantled. It never came to running production in this plant as, when production was to be started a t the close of the war, the plant was destroyed by bombs. When the Soviets went there they at once inquired about the plant. They rebuilt it and put in into operation, after which it was most carefully dismantled. The stripped parts and the specialists (chemical experts Dr. Geib and Dr. Sim and the engineer of the plant Dr. Bode) were transferred to the Soviet Union.

2. Production :

a. Primary ammonia production amounts to about 12,000 tons per month (abbr. Tpm). The production would have been much higher for a long time if the Soviets did not permanently create particular difficulties. The production of ammonium sulphate is about 33,000 tpm. An increase is deemed possible (official production figure 43,000 tpm).

b. The methanol production reaches 2,000 tpm.

c. The gasoline production (hydrogenation) hardly reached 2,000 tpm.

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(Average about 1,000 tpm). There was much interference on the part of the Soviets which had a bad effect on the production. Only one chamber is working. 25X1X

d. [redacted] amount of caprolactan produced. He estimated maximum at 40 tpm.

e. The installation for the production of sulphuric acid has been dismantled but the production resumed to a small degree; first, for disposing of waste products, second, for meeting the plant's own requirements. It could not possibly be called a large-scale industrial production.

f. The sulphuric acid produced in Leuna is so bad that it does not even bring about the required caustic effect. Under operation, complaints about this defect never cease.

3. Dismantling of the gasoline hydrogenation plant :

a. The undamaged part of the gasoline hydrogenation plant worked under Soviet management until 1946 when it was dismantled and dispatched to the Soviet Union. At the same time one of the most up-to-date high-pressure boilers of a pressure of 120 atmospheres used for power drive, was sent to the Soviet Union. This boiler, with its steam pressure of 120 kg/sq.cm. above atmosph. pressure made possible a very high energy exploitation of the initial energy of the coal and, in addition, worked with two low-pressure stages of 30 to 40 kg. per sq.cm. above atmosph. pressure , the stepwise expansion of the steam still freeing a considerable amount of electric energy.

b. Under the stripping operations the boiler was cut into large sections. Experts in the Leuna Works think it impossible to re-assemble the boiler so as to be steamtight and to remain steamtight against pressures up to 120 kg per sq.cm. a. a. (atue) after this high-grade apparatus has been transported over long distances and repeatedly trans-shipped on the Soviet railroads. It is thought that the boiler is practically valueless and lost for the Soviets.

c. At the large hydrogenation plant extensive reconstruction operations have been in progress since 1946. The managers of the plant say that there is reason to hope that, by the spring of 1949, it will be possible to again put in operation the gasoline hydrogenation plant with an initial material of three quarters of lignite and one quarter of pit coal. The lignite raw material must be carried to the plant on the only plant-owned double-track railroad line leading to the plant from the Bitterfeld district (H 52/L 14). For resuming the hydrogenation operations pit, coal from the Ruhr district is quite indispensable, as already mentioned; this is the opinion of the German experts in the plant.

d. During the dismantling operations of the hydrogenation plant the valuable catalysers in the shape of platinum grids were also dismantled.

Field Comment :

a. The report confirms and partly supplements previous statements on the dismantling operations in the Leuna plant. A new feature

is the statement that 10 percent of the production of nitric acid and sulphuric acid for the plant's own requirements have again been taken up. According to one of the previous reports, the heavy water installation of the Leuna plant has been dismantled but in lieu of it, a research section dealing with the development of heavy water production has been reinstalled.

b. The output figures for pure oxygen (12,000 tpm) and fertilizers (ammonium sulphate 33,000 tpm) are only a little below those cited in previous reports. As the plant had a yearly capacity of 300,000 tons of pure nitrogen the present production is about 50 to 55 percent of the peacetime production. The amount of synthetic oxygen required by husbandry in the Soviet Zone of Germany is at least 175,000 tons per year (abbr; tpy). Thus, one may safely assume that the production for 1949 could hardly meet this requirement. According to Die Wirtschaft, No 21, 1 November 1949, Berlin, issued in the Soviet Zone of Germany the Leuna plant fulfilled its annual quota of fertilizers amounting to 430,000 tons of ammonium sulphate as early as in November 1949.
In contrast, the production of gasoline is said to be under 2,000 tpm; this figure does not agree with those of a previous report which estimated the production of gasoline as follows :
First, by hydrogenation on tar basis after June 1949, an output of 10,000 tpm and, second, by hydrogenation on lignite basis (using two chambers which had not been dismantled) after May 1949, a monthly production of 5,000 tons of gasoline.

c. The production now chiefly stressed by the Leuna plant is undoubtedly the manufacture of nitrogen for husbandry in the Soviet Zone of Germany. Other important lines of production are the production of gasoline and synthetic alcohol. As the production methods for alcoholic products, ammonia and gasoline are practically the same, the capacity left after the dismantling operations forces one to confine the production to only one product at a time. It may, therefore, safely be assumed that the production figures for gasoline stated in this report, i.e. about 25,000 tons per year, are correct.

d. The Leuna plant is state property of the Soviet Union and is affiliated to the Soviet Corporation Mineralnyc Udobreniya.